1: Lorimer T-3 (1930-4; 1934-5) 1938 AV7 Burusho AV7

342 these narrow planks placed side by side and pierced by horizontal holes
335 through which two parallel rods are threaded; the hinge is a longer
piece of wood pointed at both ends and rotating into holes in threshold
and lintel; while the whole is secured by an ingenious wooden lock.
177 Most villages, however, now possess a carpenter or two, trained in the
463 P.W.D. workshop at Gilgit and armed with plane and saw, who can pro-
322 duce more Europeanized doors and cupboards, to the greater comfort
of their owners and the selfish regret of the anthropologist. The old
home-made door is still in use for barn and byre.

592 Every peasant family is almost entirely self-supporting and inde-
291 pendent, eating the produce of its own laboriously and beautifully
177 terraced fields (PLATE I), wearing the woollen cloaks and caps spun
and woven from the wool of its own sheep, and booted from the
skin of its own beasts. The only foreign garments worn are the
415 cotton shirts and trousers of comparatively recent introduction, now
237 considered indispensable by both sexes, and the merry little cotton caps,
plain or silk-embroidered, which have replaced the heavy woollen
281 salvation-army bonnet of the women. Butter is made and water
carried in skins; grain and flour are carried in skin-bags or sacks and
stored in skin-sacks or wooden bins. Rugs, saddlebags and ropes are
woven of goat's hair.

137 In a country where no unirrigated tree can grow, timber is very
415 scarce. An old apricot or appletree is sometimes available, or the root
of an old vine, otherwise the only general timber is the poplar, grown
primarily for poles and rafters, and the willow, absolutely essential for
baskets (PLATE II), a dozen varieties of which are needed for carrying
apricots, manure, dry leaves, straw etc., and for storing potatoes and
dried fruit.

[134] The soil of Hunza is unimaginably poor, consisting in fact of little
233 but powdered-up mountain side. The scarcity of water means also
246 the non-existence of pasture, and the few animals that can be fed eke
out a spartan existence on the scraps of grass growing on the rare semi-
irrigated strips of hillside or beside the water-channels, and on such
weeds amongst the growing crops as are not earmarked for human
consumption or remain after the crops have been reaped. This scanty
provision is supplemented by the autumn harvest of dry leaves (not
one of which lies on the ground ungarnered), the straw and stubble,
and occasionally a small quantity of dried grass. Only a few families
233 command enough land and water to grow a little lucerne for fodder.
The most livestock that the average household of 10 to 20 persons

1: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1938 AV7 Burusho AV7

233 The most livestock that the average household of 10 to 20 persons
241 hopes to possess is a tiny flock of 20 to 25 sheep, goats and cows. In
237 these circumstances manure is more precious than gold, and the small
592 children who conduct a cow to pasture carry a shoulder basket in which every ounce of the day's output is scrupulously collected and brought home.

233 When the snow retreats on the upper mountains a few patches of green are left here and there, and the more athletic beasts are taken up by young men who live in shelters with their charges, collect the manure, convert the milk into butter and bring these home with the animals when the snows claim their own again. These patches of high pasture, several thousand feet above the villages, are all too few and can only be reached by serious feats of mountaineering. Through field-glasses we could see the grazing animals clinging—by their eyebrows as it seemed—to their precipitous 'summer pastures', but it was impossible to ride up even on a yak, and at our age impossible to climb on foot for a nearer view.

As soon as the trees put out their leaves in spring, each 'donkey tree' (*i.e.*, non-fruit-bearing) is stripped of every scrap of spare foliage to feed the half-starved beasts. This luxury diet has to be very carefully administered lest the animals should perish of its unaccustomed succulence.

243 The major crops grown by the Hunza people for their own use are
[177] wheat, barley, several kinds of millet, sweet and bitter buckwheat, nowadays also the highly-valued potato (introduced by the British in 1892) and small quantities of various pulses. Barley must have been the original staple crop, for all the traditional festivals, the Seed-sowing of early spring, the First Reaping of early summer and the Harvest
[242] Home, relate to barley alone. The peasant is wise about rotation of crops and the various types of wheat, millet, etc., which thrive best in given conditions. Wheaten bread is much preferred to any other, but barley remains the larger crop because spring-sown barley ripens three or four weeks before even the winter-sown wheat, and the vacant fields can be resown with millet; whereas after the wheat only buckwheat can hope to ripen before winter. Bitter buckwheat is frankly detested, but it is hardier than the sweet and can better withstand an attack of early frost, so a certain amount of it is always sown as an insurance.

So poor is the soil, so scanty the manure, that in the newer villages like Aliabad, the average return is only sevenfold and even the storeyed fields of Baltit, which have been tilled in the sweat of man and woman's brow for at least 600 years and probably for twice or thrice as long, yield

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

Chapter 19

HARVEST THANKSGIVING

THERE are a couple of minor items of the autumn harvest I have omitted to mention. In Aliabid, the widest and most gently sloping bay of the Hunza mountain side, there is for one short stretch of perhaps a mile a patch of ground above the level of possible fields before the steep cliff face begins. Through and above this run the third and fourth of our horizontal watercourses, offshoots from the Berber Channel that waters the higher levels of Baltit and derives also from the great glacier of the Ulter Ber, but takes off much higher up than the Dala. Sufficient water can occasionally be spared from these two channels (which in the main are needed to irrigate high-lying "gardens" of trees) to flood these rocky slopes, which then bring forth that rarest of Hunza products, natural grass. These *toqs*, as they are called, are divided into strips by loose stone walls and used as grazing grounds by whoever leases them. Two or even four families often combine to share a *toq*, and on your walks you will find children of various sizes in charge of a few animals; a small girl may be sitting gravely alone practising embroidery stitches on a strip of calico, a boy may be twisting the string of horse-gut for his catapult bow, a group may be romping together or playing a game like rounders with a home-spun cap for ball, or "horses" where half the players are mounted on the others' backs and the pairs charge each other to a fall, and any rider thrown becomes in turn a horse. When these livelier games begin to pall, a couple will withdraw to the edge of the little channel and scratch a draught-board on a level patch of ground and play with pebbles white and grey as men. The board is formed of triangles whose

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burushо AV7

857 tarily empty field, playing team games of tipcat or chucking stones at a mark—they have dozens of admirable games, with rules strictly adhered to—the small ones sit about and look on or amuse themselves dabbling in water if there is any or making mud-pies. A group of youngsters were playing round me one day when a tiny girl unaccountably took fright and set up a terrified howl. A big boy stooped to comfort her: "There, there, don't cry, don't be afraid," he said soothingly, and wrapped his cloak round her to shut out whatever was the disturbing sight (I rather think it was I), and patted her reassuringly. "That will be your little sister?" said I. "No, no," was the answer, "I don't know really whose kid it is."

246 241 As autumn approaches and no further growth can be hoped from the grass, these mountain meadows are painstakingly reaped, cut this time, with the blunt iron sickles—for the roots must be left for next year—and the tiny bunches of grass tied up. There will be a few longer, tougher stalks in each double handful, and these are doubled back over the shorter ones and the bundle tied twice, once at the base where it is fattest, and once near the top where the bent heads are caught. These bundles are then laid out in the sun—a benevolent accessory to harvest that never faileth—and gathered in to form part of the winter fodder. Then follows an incredible sight: every inch of the mountain side is painstakingly swept by the Nímos and Shamúlis, whose besoms are minute thorn bushes. Every pellet of sheep or goat, every half inch of stubbly grass above the root is garnered into the tiny shoulder baskets and added to the manure. When you have seen one strip of ground thus treated you might think the job was done; not a bit of it. A few days later Nímo and Shamúli are at it again and yet again, till not one speck of animal or vegetable matter remains. You can imagine that there is no need when walking round Hunza to "pick your steps" as in an English meadow.

● 233 Every individual leaf, from garden or orchard, from watercourse or steep hill-garden, is similarly swept up and stored; these dry leaves are the staple winter food for the stalled beasts —no wonder the milk lacks cream-content and the sheep is bare of fat! No wonder that I shudder now to see our autumn

2: Lorimer T-3 (1933-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

233 bonfires recklessly consuming grass-cuttings and leaves that would be worth gold in Nimo's home.

511 Burushaski is an amazingly rich language, but it has evolved no word for "litter-lout." Go where you will in lane or courtyard, over field or bare hillside, you will not see an eggshell or a fleck of wool or a nutshell lying about. Hunza must be, bar none, the cleanest and the tidiest spot on earth. If a child is lucky enough to be given a few apricot stones he will crack them on a rock, eat the kernels with gusto, and gather up the shells for mother's fire. Only in a couple of the narrow lanes of the deserted fort did we stumble on a cast-away rag or two. When a homespun cloak has served father for three years' hard work, it will descend to a son, or be handed on to an orphan relation; when it is torn and tattered past repair it is carefully plucked to pieces, washed, beaten, and re-spun to make a girl's cloak, for her work is less strenuous than the boy's, and the re-spun cloak is stout enough for her and quite as warm.

711 Whatever the theoretical tenets of the Maulai (Ismaili) dissenters may be—and of these Professor Ivanow can best speak—the simple Hunzukuts has evolved for himself quite the most practical and admirable modification of Islam that
562 I have ever seen or heard of. He does not veil his womenfolk nor banish them to separate quarters, but treats them as equal partners in field and home. His standard of morals is so high that when a young husband goes abroad, he trusts his young wife to the care of his father and brothers without misgiving.
562 We heard no case of such a trust being abused. He retains his
515 own custom of exogamic marriage between the clans and the normal first-cousin marriage of Islam (though recognized as religiously allowable and occasionally practised by the upper families) savours to the ordinary peasant of incest, and is in fact avoided, though not in principle taboo; he also, as we have noted, preserves his own fastidious and wholesome ideas about sanitation, and keeps his running water scrupulously
713 pure. No archbishops or bishops (whom he would term *pirs*), and no professional priests or *mullas* reside in his territories, for which no doubt he has to thank some tacit concordat between his wise ruler and His Highness the Agha Khan, the spiritual head of the Ismailis.

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

cumference, twisted them with his fingers till he had a small 286
nucleus of double thread. With a wooden peg he fastened this tiny ball so that it could not unroll, and started swinging it round his head, letting it touch the ground now and again to increase the spin. It travelled in wider and wider circles till the connecting thread became of unmanageable length and began to kink. Then he hauled it in and wound the beautifully twisted length of doubled thread on to the little ball and again pegged it down. Thus he continued till the original ball was exhausted.

Not long after, the Ustád's Hérul Nisa came to say that they were setting up a goats'-hair loom at their house if we would care to see it. We found that this time a large vertical frame standing on the roof of No. 8, lashed to the rafter of the balcony, and in course of being strung with just such a warp thread as Kalbi had shown us in the making. While Hunza sheep [233] ●
are uniformly white, three kinds of goat are kept: white, brown, and black. Black hair is used for the warp, while the bobbins are wound with white and brown. The bobbins in this case are long, needle-like rods the full width of the cloth, 2 feet or so, with the hair wound round notches in each end. There are only two heddles, thrown backwards and forwards by a forked peg like a boy's catapult. Goats'-hair weaving is a slower job and heavier than wool-weaving, but the Ustád is master of it, too, and was again initiating two younger men. The different coloured hair allows of pattern-weaving, and they enjoy devising new stripes and squares of brown and white. A very heavy comb is needed to beat down the intractable material, and in order to prevent the cloth being drawn too tight by the cross threads, two "bows" of flexible wood were spiked across it to keep it flat and taut. These are inserted as near as possible to the working edge and moved up 352
as work progresses. The goats'-hair strips are used as rugs, or 415
doubled and sewn together to form sacks and saddle-bags.

One day we were exploring the half-ruined village of the 346
old fort, threading the narrow switchback alleys between 345
deserted houses—so narrow that in places you could only edge along sideways—looking for points of vantage from which to

WINTER AND THE "GREAT COLD"

The central compartment—not unlike a kitchen sink—had 273
a stone floor slightly sloping towards a hole in front which was fitted with a neat little spout of birchbark, below which a great iron cauldron stood. One of the young men of the family (having doubtless washed his feet) leapt into the sink, rested his hands on the sides of it, and tramped, tramped, tramped, with all his weight. It looked very like hard work. Another man crouched alongside the spout, holding a large-meshed basket which filtered the juice as it ran out into the cauldron. The skins thus trapped were thrown back for another trampling. As required, further supplies of grapes were taken from the side compartments and thrown into the wine-press. After seeing our fill of this process and taking what photographs were possible in the patchwork of light and shade, we climbed steeply uphill to a flattish spot where other even more interesting activities were afoot.

Under a big boulder a flat stone had been converted into a trough by little "concrete" walls made of sand mixed with fat. The slimy mush of skins, stalks, and stones left after yesterday's pressing had been brought up here. In the trough they laid a wicker ring 9 or 10 inches across and a couple of inches thick. Into this they dumped as much of the green stuff as it would hold; then they laid another ring on the top of the first and filled it till they had a pile a foot high or so. On top they now placed a flat slab of stone, and across it a stout pole for lever, which they wedged firmly under the boulder as a fulcrum. The pole projected like one half of a see-saw. On to it a man leapt, thus pressing down the stone slab on to the articulated basket, and out gushed the juice into a vessel below. Then the stone was lifted, the top ring of the ingenious basket thrown aside, and the squeezing process repeated till nothing was left but a wet round cake of skins, seeds, and stalks. This is then [233] •
put in the sun to dry, and is much valued as a cattle food. Our wine-friends told us that the wine made from this second pressing is counted superior to the first.

When the receiving vessels are full, the juice is transferred through a wooden funnel into a skin sack and set aside to ferment. It is not allowed to stand overlong, for October's

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addressed to each of the four corners of the shed. To our amazement we saw by the light of the flames that the shed was chock full of goats (we had imagined that they would have been cleared out for the ceremony) who seemed not in the least perturbed. Nadíro then came out again and lit a torch of juniper twigs at the fire and went in to wave it similarly into each of the four corners. Bibi Anjír then handed down a big wooden basin of *múl* which looked like a rather slushy brown pudding with pinkish trimming on top. This festive dish is made only on special occasions, such as a child's birth or the like. Before starting in to eat the *múl* or hand it round, the old man took his stand in the door of the byre and with great dignity and reverence lifted his eyes to heaven and recited the fumigating prayer. Bits of it ran something like this: "O Moses, Holy Prophet, grant that one hundred milking vessels may be required, and that our shears may be used on a hundred sheep! May kid follow after kid and lamb after lamb! May there be rams with curly horns and he-goats with short horns turned in! May milk flow in floods and may the butter pit be filled with butter!"

Happily DL had already got the prayer written down so we were able to follow it better than if we had been hearing it for the first time, and were even able to note that the Ustád got it a bit mixed in parts. We ascertained what was the point of the "short horns turned in." It is simply a question of packing. The byres are small and the beasts have all got to live crowded together in them throughout the winter, so that a princely he-goat with spreading horns is a disaster to his owner and a danger to his fellows.

Now came the moment when the family and friends would tuck into the *múl*, and we thanked our kind hosts most warmly for letting us see the little ceremony, and fled to the warmth of our own fire and our butterless tea. I was in terror lest we should be pressed to partake of the *múl* which is so special a dish that it was sure to be reeking of priceless *maltash*—of which we had no wish to rob them.

The next item on the Hunza communal programme is the Great Wedding Day, which falls about mid-December on some Thursday fixed by the Mir in consultation with the diviners.

WINTER AND THE "GREAT COLD"

up and up amongst the stones till they look like mites in a cheese. What they find to eat is a mystery, for there is not one visible blade of grass and not one inch of thorn. But they "feed" there all day with the boys in the offing to see that they do not stray too far.

The Hunza sheep have prudently established the tradition that they cannot climb so high without breaking their legs, so they stay farther down where there is a small amount of very scanty grass (a home sheep would not recognize it as such) and an occasional dead leaf to gorge on.

Khano pointed out the "lizards' apricots"; patches of yellow, green, grey, and white lichen, which he says the lizards live on. He showed us the spoor of a fox and the tracks of his friends and a host of other interesting things. He's an amusing little play-actor. "Oh, I've got a thorn in my foot!" and he pretended to cry and limp helplessly about. Then with a laugh he clutched his foot, stooped to meet it, and whisked the thorn out with his teeth—a huge thing it was. Next he pulled a *mindak* out of some unexpected recess in his clothing and tried to teach us to play shuttlecock. The *mindak* is a most attractive toy. You get a small flat central button of lead and somehow contrive to attach to it a horizontal frill of kids' hair, black or white preferred. You then throw it in the air and try to kick it up with your foot, counting how often you succeed before letting it fall to the ground. You may kick it with your instep in an amateurish way, but the stylish thing is to strike it with the sole of your bare foot. The boys are extraordinarily adept, but the art is one not easily acquired in leather-shod middle age. Our indifferent attempts reduced us all three to helpless laughter. We were much amused to note that just as with the girls stotting their balls, the reckoning started at three and your first successful stroke was counted "four." In return for this demonstration lesson I tried to teach Khano to do handstands and cart-wheels, but my attempts to demonstrate these arts were somewhat unconvincing.

On the way home we met Kamber (Ustád Nadíro's boy) driving his herd of goats helter-skelter downhill. DL had

BARLEY SOWING AND "STARVATION SPRINGTIME"

A month later, by the third week of March, we were well into the Spring. The winter wheat formed a bright green carpet on the shelf-like fields, about three-quarters of our Aliábád ground being given over to it.

The barley which the men had sown after the Bopfau, just the other day it seemed, was showing green over the most of the rest, and would presently outstrip the wheat and ripen first. The only brown fields left were those that were being prepared for vegetables and potatoes. No leaves were yet showing anywhere, but fat red apricot buds looked promising.

As autumn drew in we had begun to feel a little disappointed in our Hunza friends whose marvellous field-walls we had always admired so much with not one single stone out of its place. There were breaches here and there, sometimes quite big ones, and paths were often blocked by a fall of stones, and no one seemed to bother. This puzzled us as out of character, but as soon as the last fear of frost was over, every spare moment was spent by men and boys restoring the countryside to its normal state of faultless tidiness. We now saw the reason of the apparent neglect. The frost and ice simply tear the walls to pieces, and to repair them during winter would be sheer folly. We might perhaps have divined this; but now at any rate we knew.

One early day in March we saw Khano on the mountain side walking slowly and with circumspection. This was so strange a sight that we went over to investigate. "What are you carrying so carefully under your *choga*?" "My first kid," he said, opening his cloak to display the tiny head with triumph. "That's the mother there. I'm expecting four to-morrow. I do hope they won't get born at night in the byre. I'd rather they came when I'm out with them alone." "How do you happen to have so many goats?" we asked. "Oh, I'm herding for the Yerpa now. He's no boys of his own, you see." How crazy it would be to call a lad like that "uneducated" because he doesn't happen to have learned to read or write! He is proudly able to act as accoucheur to his goats, which few of our youngsters at home would feel equal to. We enquired later of Dádo and the rest what sort of wages Khano was able to earn, and their view was that he was probably not given

233 ary wage in our sense of the term, but that he would certainly be getting one or two free meals a day, and thus sensibly reducing the rationing problems of his own home. Hunza sheep lamb twice a year, but the goats have kids once only, in the Spring. Khano's promotion to wage-earning status was a little sad for us, for we saw him much more rarely after that.

242 One fine morning early in March the apricot trees that line
245 the Dála just in front of our rest-house were suddenly invaded by the whole Dastagul family armed with long sticks, to the end of which a sharpened piece of curved iron had been attached. With infinite care they inspected every branch, and wherever they detected the nest of an insect they snipped down the twig on which it rested. These nests were small, cocoon-like things only about an inch long, with a nasty little grub inside. The nests clung very tight to their hospitable perch, and it was often necessary to cut quite a biggish spray in order to secure them; each was diligently collected and borne home to the fire. We were not qualified to identify the pest on which war was being waged, but it was reported to devour both leaves and fruit if not destroyed. All through the country every single apricot tree is scrupulously examined and cleared—there must be thousands. We certainly did not later see a single one that seemed to be suffering from insect attack.

563 About this time we made another addition to our re-
167 tainers—a dear old grey-bearded man with the jolliest bright
361 eyes and a merry, happy smile, but not a tooth in his head, was roped in to work at Wakhi. The Wakhis, as I have said, are immigrants into the north of Hunza from the Wakhan districts of Afghanistan. They have settled in various places above the level at which the Burusho themselves care to live. Hunza men will tell you that they cannot induce their womenfolk to live where the apricot will not ripen. I suspect, however, that the men are just as unwilling to forgo their trees and wheat and fruit, but Adam-like prefer to blame their mates. The higher villages of Hunza are therefore inhabited almost wholly by Wakhi-speakers. Being unaccustomed to wheat, apricots, or

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

Chapter 27

THE FIRST OF THE HARVEST

000 THE first few days after our return we spent in picking up threads again, and very jolly it was to make the tour of the dear, familiar farmsteads and be shown the new kids and lambs, the new stone shed, etc., to comment on the progress each field was making—in some, little knobs were forming on the barley stalks, where presently the new ears would come, in some few, the ears were already taking shape—to see how far the new fields had progressed towards completion, and what jobs were now in hand. We were touched to find that it was not only our more immediate, better-known neighbours who seemed glad to see us, but even the more distant, rarely visited families flocked to the doors and came out to kiss our hands till the greetings became almost monotonous: "We have missed you. You were long away. We are glad you are back. Are you well?" Old men tottered up to talk to us, young mothers brought new babies to be introduced; Baby Faqér laughed and crowed and "knew his grandmother" (he was a very bright and intelligent little chap for only five months), and little Afrots had not forgotten how to shake hands and say "How do you do?" performing these feats to the admiration of crowds from the three adjacent house-roofs and a large passing party in the lane.

233 241 Bare fields that had been lying fallow were being got ready and dotted with manure dumps for the independent millets, sand was being dug from the silt traps to add to the beasts' bedding, whence it would duly reach the fields, and women were fetching baskets of earth from the "Mir's Stables" to add to the banked soil round their potatoes. The whole

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

countryside was a hive of industry. We missed the larger animals and learnt that they had already been taken up to the *tér* for the summer, while the tiny lambs and kids who were being carefully shepherded about to get what scanty grazing they could find without trespassing into the springing crops, demanded the unceasing vigilance of their small guardians.

The most noticeable new phenomenon was the constant stream of people, men or women, stooping under huge bundles of greenery till they looked in truth "like trees walking." We had come back to find the poplars well clothed and bushy (for poplars), giving an unwonted air of luxury to the landscape, but now they were being ruthlessly stripped to provide fodder for the animals, half starved throughout the winter on a diet of dry leaves. Poplar, willow, and *gindáwer* are all laid under contribution, but the new fodder has to be very carefully issued at first lest the poor beasts should perish of its unaccustomed succulence. I stood one day watching and photographing a minute human insect at the top of a 50 or 60 foot poplar skilfully stripping it of its spring glory and leaving only the tiniest green tuft at the top. A whole handsome row were about to be similarly shorn. In a moment of thoughtlessness I said to the peasant at my side: "They look so lovely, it does seem a pity. . . ." He turned on me almost fiercely: "What, Mother? Would you starve our beasts for the sake of a poplar tree? The leaves will come again next spring. There is no cure for a dead sheep." I stood rebuked.

No. 3 had been laying out a new vegetable plot. Apicho showed me the various beds ready for beans, scarlet runners (which here have yellow flowers), marrows, and greens, but confessed that manure was their great problem. They have only one cow, poor devils, and with the best will in the world one cow cannot produce enough.

The end of May is the season when new saplings of poplar, willow, etc., are planted, and we occasionally met people carrying off bundles of them to set in place. The mills were in action again, and such fortunate folk as had a little grain still left from their emergency store—not, after all, exhausted by weddings or funerals—were carrying pathetically small bags of it to be ground.

it to be ground. But "Starvation Springtime" was still ruling the land, and we noticed the children looking very thin and peaky, and a few with sores on their faces—hunger sores. We had often remarked on the complete absence of skin diseases amongst these cleanly folk, and the hunger sores rapidly disappeared with the coming of more food.

The opening of June saw weeding being very intensively carried out, not only for the sake of the growing crops, but for the weeds' own sake; those which were dubbed "crows' vegetables" were thrown to the sheep and goats, while sorrel and the like found their way into the family cooking-pot. Irrigation questions were now serious, for the crops must not be starved of water at the critical moment, and we used to meet bands of Aliábádkuts armed with shovels walking out the eight or more miles to the highest point of the Dála to guard and govern the controlling sluices. The potatoes were now beginning to flower and the mulberries to show signs of ripening, and the air was rent by shrill boy and girl noises designed to scare the birds off the mulberry trees. Every boy was armed with his catapult bow, made and strung of course by his own hands. I asked Yaman how many birds he had killed with his little stones: "Seventy-two, so far this season, Mother, but I'll get lots more." "What do you do with them?" "Oh, I take them home and put them in the pot, but there's not much meat on them." Our first impression of Hunza had been that, except for magpies, it was an entirely birdless land; this was a mistake. Migratory birds came in flocks at various seasons when any sort of likely food was going. Their various species I was not ornithologist enough to know; to me, as to A. J. Balfour, each was just "an average small bird," and the Hunza terminology was no great help to identification, for they were known as "mulberry birds," "barley birds," or the like, according to which crop they threatened. We now also for the first time saw shorn goats. Whereas the Hunza sheep are robbed of their wool just whenever wool is needed, so that you never see a really generous-looking ample fleece, the goats are shorn only once a year, in early summer. If you think of it, goat's hair would be too wiry to spin at all unless it were a decent length.

THE FIRST OF THE HARVEST

Windy weather was knocking down unripe mulberries in alarming quantities, which were incontinently guzzled by the goats and sheep.

By June 9th ripe mulberries were reported from Ganesh and Hasanabad, some hundreds of feet below us, but we had to wait another three weeks for ours.

One afternoon we were out on the hillside and stopped to watch a group of boys playing a complicated game of *bada bada* with a lot of small stones cast into twelve little holes in the ground. It was roughly equivalent to some of our games of marbles, and thinking of a large consignment of these which we had brought with us for future gifts we ruefully realized how useless marbles would be in a country where there are not six inches of smooth, level ground. As we sat trying to master the rules of *bada bada* Gulo crept up alongside me and slipped her hand confidentially into mine, whispering "Our pussy cat has had a confinement," using for fun the same term as she would have applied to her mother, and not the word suitable for cats. "There are three kittens, and they opened their eyes yesterday; do come and see them!"

When the game was over we accordingly started crosswise downhill to No. 3. I halted at the door to make sure that Zénába was prepared to endorse the impulsive invitation. She was sitting crouched by the hearth boiling the greens for dinner and jumped up with delight to bring us in. We squatted down on a sleeping-bench, from the back of which the children produced a round fruit basket in which the cat was cosily curled up. She was evidently accustomed to seeing her babies tenderly handled, for she let us take them out without other comment than a loud purr. Dear little furry things they were, about the size of small mice, and Gulo bubbled over: "She made first the black one and then the white one and then the yellow one—and that was all." Meantime, in addition to Kaníza and Apícho, a strange young man had drifted in to see what was going on, and presently Father arrived and we all chatted together very gaily. Laughing somewhat apologetically, Zénába confessed that she had drawn on the emergency reserve to make some *daudo* (a sort of porridge with butter) for pussy

THE FIRST OF THE HARVEST

Men left at home in the village were now making pilgrimages towards the *tér* to fetch down the manure that their brothers up on the mountain side with the animals have been scrupulously collecting. They usually arrange to meet half way, the village brother taking up any supplies the other may need and the brother of the *tér* bringing down not only manure but butter and *brús*, a kind of preparation of dried curd not unlike cream cheese. The lads up at the *tér* have rather a jolly time. They take up only their oldest clothes, for the life is rough and the work is hard. Anywhere that there is a scrap of suitable ground they plant a little barley, harnessing themselves to the plough so as not to put work on to the horses or oxen they may have with them, who are considered to have earned a holiday. Each day at dawn they loose their animals, but keep a careful eye on them, and sometimes have hair-raising adventures in rescuing a beast which has fallen down a cliff. There used to be considerable danger from wild animals, but nowadays there are few of these surviving. Any family that lacks a spare son to take the animals up entrusts them to the care of some other, after a rather touching little ceremony in which the beasts are solemnly committed to the care of their new master, who is at the same time given a certain amount of grain with him as part of his fee. Milking, making butter, collecting the manure, tending the barley (if any), cooking their own food, corralling the animals at night, etc., occupy the herds the greater part of the time, but they find leisure enough for various games and feats of skill.

Every now and again they decide to supplement their scanty rations—the village can spare little enough to send with them—by the sacrifice of a goat and a feast of meat. The donor of the beast plays for the evening the rôle of Mir, appoints another as his Wazir, and they play-act their several parts with gusto. It is frankly admitted that the animal sacrificed to make this holiday usually is one of those whose owner is not present. When eventually the boy returns, minus one of the animals for which he was trustee, he formally announces the regrettable "loss" to its owner. The nature of the catastrophe is fully understood but not crudely stated. A wise owner is

expected to reply: "It is God's will. Accidents will happen. After all, they are beasts of the mountain and the wild." He is reckoned a churlish fellow who institutes enquiries and demands compensation, though no one denies his right to it. The liberty to indulge in an occasional free feed is, we understood, sparingly taken and not abused.

With luck a she-goat will yield enough milk while up on the summer pastures to make two *maltash*, i.e. two birch bark parcels of butter for storage. If the goat is a trustee goat the herd is expected to hand one *maltash* to her owner and to keep the balance as his fee. Sheep's milk is poor in fat content and yields little butter, so it is usually devoted to making *brús* and *rakhpín*, a kind of hard, dried curd which has great lasting qualities and the appearance of a cake of soap.

The day that the herds return from the mountain with their charges is a festive one for the villages. Large parties go out to meet the returning absentees. Before finally leaving the *tér*, driven down by cold and the advancing autumn snows, the herds bake some special little cakes to bring back with them, and crowds of dancing, shouting boys and girls fall on their elder brothers demanding their share. Trust the Hunzukuts to stage a festival on the slightest provocation.

Our Ernest of the white horse reappeared unexpectedly from the *tér* in the middle of the season and walked over from Hasanabad to call on us and bring an offering of *brús* for DL and of wild mountain flowers for me. He had given his animals into a friend's charge, and taken a couple of days off because he was a member of the Hasanabad polo team and was wanted to play in an inter-village match. These matches rouse as much interest as Arsenal *versus* Chelsea, and a good player who is also the possessor of a good pony can ill be spared. I duly took a photo of him and The Cat, he no longer in the rôle of the humble *sais* but of the gentleman polo player. Stout fellow!

These early June days were the time for apricot and mulberry grafting. The cultivated fruit shoots are grafted on to wild trees. We watched the process, about which the Hunzukuts have little to learn. Each graft was given a double lashing of bark from mulberry root. We returned later and found them all thriving.

3: Lorimer L-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1935 AV7 Burusho AV7

Among the vast and savage mountains of the Western Karakoram, which are generally devoid of a blade of grass, and of which the surface by falls of cliff and boulders, the slipping of detritus, and the downpouring of mud-floods, is kept in a constantly raw and unstable state, nature has made it possible for a small population to maintain itself, in the sweat of its brow, by agriculture and the pasturing of small cattle.

Terraces, apparently the remains of glacial deposits, supplemented it may be by downpourings from the mountain sides, have been left here and there along the sides of the valleys of the main rivers, at a height usually of some hundreds of feet above their stony beds. Where water for irrigation can be obtained from side-ravines these tracts can be cultivated. Without irrigation no cultivation is possible. There are no rain-watered cereal crops and water cannot be raised from the main river. The surface of these terraces is not flat, but slopes down at every kind of angle from the hillsides till the terraces end in abrupt earth-cliffs descending to the river beds. As the ground has to be irrigated it also has to be more or less levelled, otherwise all the soil would soon be washed away. This is accomplished by constructing terraced fields, the lower edges of which are supported by revetting walls built up of the rounded stones available in the diluvium. This revetting is highly skilled work, and is beautifully carried out, and maintained in perfect repair by the Hunzukuts. The Nagirkuts seem on the whole to be less strenuous workers and less tidy-minded cultivators.

There remains the task of constructing channels to bring water from where it is available, often miles away. These channels are designed with precision and executed with great resource and ingenuity, often being carried on revetted or galleried aqueducts across cliff faces. Having made your land and brought your water, it still remains to elaborate a system of distributing the water among the various communities or individuals entitled to a share of it.

Pressure of population in recent years has led to constant endeavours to devise means of providing water supplies for tracts of waterless but cultivable land. Where land and water have been

3: Lorimer L-3 (1929-4; 1934-5) 1935 AV7 Burusho AV7

241 brought together, the following are the principal crops grown in Hunza and Nagir: wheat, barley, two or three kinds of millet, buckwheat, broad beans, peas and various pulses, lucerne (yielding two crops) for fodder. Maize and rice are not grown at these levels[1]. Lucerne is often grown on the sloping unterraced hillside where water is insufficient for crops. Fruit is also an important item of cultivation. The apricot is universal, and fresh and dry the fruit is a staple food. Besides its kernels are collected and eaten, or crushed for their oil. Apples, peaches, cherries, cherry-plums and grapes are also extensively grown, but do not appear to be dried, though apples and grapes are stored in straw for some months. Pears, pomegranates and walnuts are cultivated in places. The mulberry is eaten fresh and is also dried and preserved. Poplars and willows are grown for their timber, and in the lower tracts the chenar.

●233 237 Agricultural crops and fruit would not however provide a complete subsistence. Goats, sheep and a small type of cow supply the necessary milk and fat products, particularly ghee, also hair for ropes and coarse cloth, wool for clothing, skins and hides for containing vessels, foot-wear and thongs. These cattle are kept in the villages during the cool and cold weather, when they are fed on such scanty natural grazing as is to be found, agricultural waste and dried leaves, and pay their way by providing milk and manure. During the hot months they are sent up in charge of herds to the few summer grazing-grounds (tĕr, pl. tĕrming; ter, termiŋ), which exist in the higher 234 parts of some of the nullahs. There their milk is collected and converted into forms in which it will keep: ghee, dried buttermilk etc.

361 133 [1] I.e. from about 7000′ upwards. Chhalt, the lowest village in the country, stands at 6560′. Māyūn and Hindi are probably about 7000′ and Aliābād about 7500′. Baltit is 8000′ and Nagir 7550′. Misgār, the highest place at which the Burusho have been induced to live, is 10.158′. It is said that the Burusho women refuse to go where the apricot will not ripen, and there are few Burusho settled above 8000′. In Chupūrsan and Shimshāl the Wakhis are found up to about 11.000′, which is probably the extreme limit at which barley will grow in this region. In recent years a little maize has been grown in Māyūn, Murtazābād and Ganish.

4: Lorimer L-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1935 AV7 Burusho AV7

After this the four communities of Bāltīt assembled and instituted a case with the Hamachāting, and by way of settlement they took the Ulter grazing from the Hamachāting as a fine on account of Shadun Kapūri. She was a daughter of the Berātaling and a wife of the Khūrukuts. The Diramating, as disinterested parties, had decided the case for them and the Hamachāting.

After that the Khūrukuts, the Diramiting and the Berātaling in partnership settled their flocks in Ulter. Some years later the Thams took the Ulter grazing ground for themselves and up to the present it is in the Thams' possession.

7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

from India was on this religious basis.

However, records clearly indicate that Hunza had for many years enjoyed a pleasant relationship and trade with her Chinese neighbors through the Province of Singkiang. History shows that for ages the caravans moved continually from Kashgar, Urumchi and Yarkand down through Hunza and on to Gilgit, Peshawar, Afghanistan, Persia and further westward.

Hunza in those days used a lot of rice, which came from China. Wheat has practically completely replaced rice.

If this gives rise to the impression that Hunza was not as self-sufficient as you imagined, I am sorry, but I am dealing with facts and not myths . . . unless they are so identified. I don't believe nor does data prove that, while caravans moved from Turkestan through Hunza, there was any great trade or barter between the people of Hunza and Turkestan.

But because of the regular movement of these caravans across Hunza territory, it is easy to comprehend that most of the things the Hunzans would use and require would come from China and there would be a strong Chinese or Turkic influence in the area. Upon checking closely into the records and history, I found that the Chinese district bordering Hunza was also principally Mohammedan in religion as are most of the Turkic peoples. Mir Nazim Khan states clearly in his autobiography that the Mir of Hunza had possession of vast acreages in China along the Yarkand River, on which roamed herds of yaks and other domestic beasts. (It wasn't China then as they had not yet claimed it.)

The Mirs of Hunza have for many years—in fact, from time immemorial—paid tribute to the Chinese government at Kashgar. From the records that I have been able to find, they paid tribute to Kashgar long

134 311 so sterile that Hunzas have told me, "If you irrigate new land, you must eat for five years somewhere else."

241 134 237 HUNZAS are skillful at building a limited fertility into their sterile material, given enough time. All sheep manure is carefully saved, and the fields are fertilized with it four times during each growing season. Frequent irrigation works with summer warmth and mountain ozone to decompose the manure rapidly. The growing plants thus have a few weeks of available food after each fertilization, before drainage again removes the plant food. Hunza farming is actually hydroponic gardening, with the soil functioning merely to anchor the plants.

Plainly, the plants will receive enough of only those foods that occur abundantly in sheep manure. Nitrates, phosphates, and probably calcium are deficient. Yields of wheat and alfalfa are notably lower per acre than are yields from better-fertilized American acres. Apricot trees generally have reddish leaves at the growing tips, a sure sign of soil deficiencies.

433 241 237 Even the most painstaking hydroponic gardening cannot compensate for deficiencies in the food chemistry. Moreover, their system makes Hunza one of the few countries where an agrarian economy is absolutely dependent upon the pastoral economy. [233] Even in the high mountain summer pastures, the sheep are carefuly herded into small cotes in order to preserve each night's droppings. Every few days a man climbs down the steep trail with a load of manure on his back. Effectively, the fertility of the high mountain pastures is being transferred down to Hunza's fields.

433 161 167 Unfortunately, the human population has already grown so large that the fields cannot provide sufficient food. Hunzas are moving out of their country in rather large numbers. Although the exact total of annual emigrees is unknown, it is clear that most of them go to the lower villages near Gilgit, where they soon displace their less industrious Sheena predecessors. Hundreds of Hunza's young men [648] join the Pakistan army. Others take [464] work as servants, where their honesty, [181] industry, and common sense make them highly valued. The Hunzas realise, as certain Western tourists do not, that their country is a land of little food, and even less opportunity for the future, picturesque as it is.